

# From the Editor

## GUEST EDITORIAL

### PALLIATIVE CARE EDUCATION: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Healthcare-wide momentum to advance palliative care across settings reflects a long-held vision shared by this readership. Fueled in part by the deep commitment of nurse educators, this progress has been shaped by efforts to integrate palliative care into nursing education and clinical preparation. Upstream efforts to prepare both licensure and graduate students are helping ensure the next generation of nurses is better equipped to deliver the values-driven care that defines the field. This editorial honors the vital role of nurse educators and calls on clinical leaders to join in preparing practice-ready nurses.

### EVERY NURSE'S JOURNEY IS SHAPED BY A NURSE-TEACHER

The student-educator relationship extends over multiple years, playing a formative role in students' development well before they enter the nursing workforce. Educators play a critical role in teaching and mentoring hundreds of future nurses who go on to care for thousands of patients – an impact not often acknowledged or valued. Educator support is instrumental to student retention, success, and satisfaction.<sup>1,2</sup> Such support is operationalized as not only caring and affirming, but functional, in that educators serve as academic guides toward achievement and success.<sup>1,3</sup>

Nurse educators play a pivotal role in shaping both the academic and affective development of future nurses. Academically, they cultivate essential competencies such as clinical reasoning, critical thinking, and evidence-based decision-making, ensuring graduates are well-prepared to provide safe and effective care.<sup>4</sup> Through structured learning and mentorship, they enhance students' professional readiness and ability to improve patient outcomes. Affectively, nurse educators influence students' attitudes, fostering empathy, ethical awareness, and the value of advocacy. Their guidance helps to form the professional identity and compassionate disposition required for quality, patient-centered care. Beyond academic instruction, the emotional and professional support provided helps cultivate resilient and reflective practitioners capable of navigating the complexities of today's healthcare environments.

### WHEN TEACHING BECOMES PERSONAL

A commitment to palliative care is rarely easy, and we've witnessed how nurse educators often draw on personal and professional experiences to shape their teaching. During a recent faculty development workshop, an experiential lab meant to model student-centered palliative care instruction transformed into a powerful moment of vulnerability, as faculty disclosed their own stories of loss. This experience revealed an often-overlooked truth: while educators support students and patients through emotionally demanding work, their own experiences often go unnoticed.

### LANDSCAPE OF PALLIATIVE CARE EDUCATION

Nurse educators are essential to sustaining academic continuity during times of profound uncertainty from limited faculty, clinical sites, preceptors, classroom space, and budget constraints.<sup>5-8</sup> With each new challenge, faculty swiftly transition to uphold standards while ensuring students remain on track to enter an overextended workforce. These demands—alongside intensive workloads, promotion expectations, dual academic-clinical roles, and limited resources—highlight the tenacity and dedication of faculty to their roles as nurse educators.<sup>7</sup>

This special issue of the *Journal of Hospice and Palliative Nursing* is dedicated to highlighting innovative efforts to reimagine when, where, and how palliative care education is incorporated in curricula. Each article incorporates key considerations and implications for palliative care clinicians practicing across practice settings.

### NEXT TO EVERY TEACHER, A PARTNER: A CALL TO CLINICAL LEADERS

The workshop participants reminded us of something deeply rooted in our collective identity – a steadfast commitment to nursing and to the care of others. Whether at the bedside or in the classroom, we are united by a common purpose – to



uphold the values of compassion, competence, and advocacy. The articles in this issue reflect the lasting partnership between educators and clinicians in advancing and shaping the future of the nursing profession. If you are not yet connected to a school of nursing, consider reaching out. Offer to guest lecture. Contribute your knowledge, wisdom, and your passion for hospice and palliative care. If you can welcome students into your practice settings to learn, do so. It will not only shape their future—it may also enrich your own. Let us all continue to pay it forward.

### GRATITUDE FOR ALL EDUCATORS

We want to acknowledge that every nurse is an educator, whether teaching patients, communities, or fellow healthcare professionals. Each interaction holds the potential to inspire positive change in palliative care. As guides, role models, nurturers, and leaders, we are all educators. We deeply appreciate the dedication of those sharing their work in this special issue of JHPN, and the countless others who make a lasting impact. Your efforts enrich learning and profoundly affect students and patients alike. We are all always teaching—and always learning.

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